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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 497 KENTUCKY Folklore Society

1 box. 15 folders. 724 items. 1957-1987. Originals, photocopies.

SC2014.3.75

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Founded in 1912 by a group of Kentucky college professors, the Kentucky Folklore Society was organized to collect, study and preserve the folklore of Kentucky and surrounding areas. It offered membership to both academics and non-professionals. Many of its members were teachers, and consequently from 1916 to 1950 the organization held its annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky in conjunction with the Kentucky Educational Association.

The Society's activities consisted of meetings, programs and publishing in furtherance of its educational and scholarly mission. Although it experienced periods of both inactivity and revival, the Society received support from college faculty and dedicated amateurs, especially a group of women from the Louisville area. Included among its officers and directors were WKU faculty members D.K. Wilgus, Gordon Wilson, and Lynwood Montell.

The Society's early publishing efforts consisted of four issues of the *Bulletin of the Kentucky Folk-Lore Society* from 1925-1938, and the *Kentucky Folk-Lore and Poetry Magazine* from 1926-1931. In 1955, under editor D.K. Wilgus, the Society introduced a quarterly journal, the *Kentucky Folklore Record*. In 1978, Camilla A. Collins, a faculty member in WKU's Department of Intercultural and Folk Studies, succeeded Charles S. Guthrie as editor of the *Record*. Adding the subtitle "A Regional Journal of Folklore and Folklife," she strove to provide expanded content and to appeal to scholars more than to a general or non-specialized audience.

In 1987, the *Kentucky Folklore Record* merged with the *Southern Folklore Quarterly* (a product of the University of Florida that had ceased publication in the mid-1980s) under the title *Southern Folklore*. With Collins continuing as editor, the journal was published at WKU and printed by the University Press of Kentucky. The last issue was published in 2000.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists of one box of records of the Kentucky Folklore Society dating primarily from the 1960s to the mid-1980s. Some financial and business information is included, as well as a folder of correspondence of the Society's last president, Janet Gilmore. The bulk of

the collection consists of correspondence of Camilla A. Collins, the editor of the Society's journal, the *Kentucky Folklore Record*, from 1978-1987. A collection inventory is in Folder 1.

Financial information includes data on the Society's tax status (Folder 2), sales and use tax returns (Folder 4), and cash books recording income and expenses from memberships, subscriptions and sales of publications (Folder 5). General information includes a 1957 historical sketch and a copy of the Society's 1974 constitution (Folder 2). A fiftieth-anniversary bulletin for the Society (Folder 3) provides lists of officers from 1912-1962 and programs from 1916-1961.

Correspondence of Janet Gilmore (Folder 6), a Lexington, Kentucky folklorist and the Society's president from 1983-1985, reflects a period of decline in membership and interest. After unsuccessfully attempting to organize a planning meeting and to start a newsletter (for which the Society had received a grant from the Kentucky Folklife Foundation – see application in Folder 12), Gilmore, who had moved to Wisconsin, resigned as president.

Correspondence of Dr. Camilla Collins (Folders 7-12) reflects her interest in procuring articles for the *Kentucky Folklore Record* on topics beyond the confines of the state, and in enhancing the journal's scholarly content. Included are solicitation, acceptance and rejection letters, queries and submission cover letters from prospective contributors and book reviewers, and requests for back issues; many correspondents are professional folklorists and university faculty, but some are students and non-professionals. Of interest are letters on behalf of actress Lily Tomlin (Folder 7) seeking information for a possible movie treatment in Kentucky; from a prison inmate in Texas (Folder 11) under treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and seeking an article on Vietnam combat soldiers; and from former editor D.K. Wilgus in 1984 (Folder 12) with an assessment of the future of the Society and the *Record* (he disapproved of the focus on professionals and the lack of Kentucky topics). A few letters to the *Record's* previous editor, Charles S. Guthrie, are also included.

SHELF LIST

| BOX 1 | Kentucky Folklore Society | 1957-1987 | 724 items |
|--------------|--|------------------|------------------|
| Folder 1 | Inventory | | 1 item |
| Folder 2 | Business papers; historical sketch | 1927-1978 | 15 items |
| Folder 3 | <i>Bulletin of the Kentucky Folklore Society</i> , Fiftieth Anniversary 1912-1962 | 1962 | 1 item |
| Folder 4 | Sales and use tax returns | 1966-1987 | 37 items |
| Folder 5 | Cash books | 1973-1978 | 2 items |
| Folder 6 | Correspondence of Janet Gilmore, president of Kentucky Folklore Society | 1984-1985 | 26 items |

| | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|
| Folder 7 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1978-1979 | 105 items |
| Folder 8 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1980 | 77 items |
| Folder 9 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1981 | 48 items |
| Folder 10 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1982 | 90 items |
| Folder 11 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1983 | 86 items |
| Folder 12 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1984 | 84 items |
| Folder 13 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1985 | 77 items |
| Folder 14 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1986 | 42 items |
| Folder 15 | Correspondence of Camilla Collins, editor of <i>Kentucky Folklore Record</i> | 1987 | 33 items |

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS KENTUCKY Folklore Society 1957-1987
497

Records of the Kentucky Folklore Society, primarily correspondence of president Janet Gilmore and of Dr. Camilla A. Collins, editor of the Society's journal, the *Kentucky Folklore Record*. Also includes some financial and organizational information.

1 box. 15 folders. 724 items. Originals, photocopies.

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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Authors

Collins, Camilla A. – Correspondence B1,F7-15

Folklore – Relating to
Folklorists

Gilmore, Janet Crofton, b. 1949 – Correspondence B1,F6,12-13
Guthrie, Charles Snow, 1922-2000 – Letters to B1,F7,8
Kentucky Folklife Foundation, Inc. – Relating to B1,F12
Tomlin, Mary Jean “Lily,” b. 1939 – Relating to
Wilgus, Donald Knight, 1918-1989 B1,F2,12
Wood, Sallie Anne Carrie – Correspondence B1,F10-11

SEE or SEE ALSO

Tomlin, Lily, b. 1939

See:

Tomlin, Mary Jean “Lily”

Niedermeier/Jeffrey 07/01/2014